

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention relates generally to a Plasmid Maintenance System for the stabilization of expression plasmids encoding foreign antigens, and methods for making and using the Plasmid Maintenance System. The invention optimizes the maintenance of expression plasmids at two independent levels by: (1) removing sole dependence on balanced lethal maintenance functions; and (2) incorporating at least one plasmid partition function to prevent random segregation of expression plasmids, thereby enhancing their inheritance and stability. The Plasmid Maintenance System may be employed within a plasmid which has been recombinantly engineered to express a variety of expression products.